

Archaeology Camp 2018

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The staff of the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) has completed our sixth annual Archaeology Camp, which was held June 5-7, 2018 on archaeology site Fort Pierre II. This highly popular camp for students going into the 4th, 5th and 6th grades is held in cooperation with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. There were 22 participants and 17 adult staff.

This photo gives a good overview of the excavation area. Shown are five of the six pits. The sixth (Team 5) is off camera to the right.



Archaeology Camp is an active, outdoor experience located on an archaeological site owned by the Corps. Over the years, camp has been located on two different sites, Fort Galpin and Fort Pierre II. Both are former fur trading posts from the 1850s, and both lay along the Missouri River near the capital city of Pierre and the oldest town in South Dakota, Fort Pierre.

Participants learn an introduction to the field of archaeology, why archaeological excavations are held, what stories artifacts can tell about the past, the correct method of excavating and processing a site, and how to use team-building skills.



Team Three begins the process of excavating their pit. Left to right: Rowen Hillestad, Cienna Tipton, team leader Heather Venner, Isabella Thompson, and Liam Hillestad.

Students work alongside professional archaeologists. The camp has been fortunate to have the expertise of not only the SHPO and Corps of Engineers archaeologists but also those from the South Dakota Archaeological Research Center and the Bureau of Land Management. Special programming was also provided by Kelly Morgan with Lakota Consulting LLC and Chris Leatherman with Aerial Solutions of Wyoming.

There are six pit teams made up of three or four students, an adult team leader, and an archaeologist. Students excavate, screen, measure, and map their sites. Each team also work with different archaeologists to perform pedestrian surveys and to process the artifacts they find.



Campers pose for a photo on the Missouri River bluff near the Turtle Effigy.

In addition, we plan special programming to break up the day. Over the last 6 years, these have included flint knapping, practicing with atlatls, dissecting owl pellets, making pottery, and molding animal tracks. There have been presentations on fur trading posts, American Indian pottery, native plants, zooarchaeology, flintlock guns, local fish, owls, and banding migratory birds. Tours are given of the Museum of the South Dakota State Historical Society, the South Dakota State Archives, and several local historic sites, including a turtle effigy.



Left: Matthew Reitzel with the South Dakota State Archives, discusses all the different formats of photographs they work with such as Daguerreotypes and Tintypes from the 1800s. **Right:** Ted Spencer with the South Dakota State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) explains the layout of the Museum before starting the tour.



Paige Olson, an archaeologist with the SHPO, watches as Ryker Anderson sets his dart on the atlatl before throwing it at the hay bales.

Jonas Farnen gets ready to release his dart.



Kelly Morgan with Lakota Consulting LLC gives a talk on native plants. Here she is passing around a rope of sweet grass.



Left: Kate Nelson with the SHPO explains the history of the Oahe Chapel and why it was moved to its present location. Right: Campers seemed to enjoy hearing the American Indian tale about the Turtle Effigy.



Members of Team 5 conduct a pedestrian survey, which is walking transects looking at the ground for features and artifacts.



Students learn about zooarchaeology, the study of animal remains found on archaeological sites.



Isabella Thompson & Evelyn Maravel study items at an Oahe Dam Visitor Center display.



Archaeologist Katie Lamie prepares to teach the students about processing the artifacts they found while excavating.



Some artifacts uncovered during excavating.



Chris Leatherman with Aerial Solutions of Wyoming shows campers how his drone works. Chris demonstrated how drones are helpful by giving a bird's eye view of an archaeology site.

Campers enjoy some time on the swings in the park during a lunch break.



Campers close the site by refilling the pits with the dirt that was extracted and screened.